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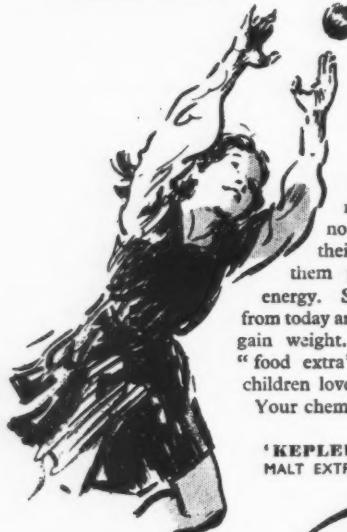
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MORE THAN EVER



*There's food as well as  
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There's hardly a waking moment when children aren't "on the go" and, naturally, they need extra nourishment to supplement their rationed diet and give them plenty of strength and energy. Start them on 'Kepler' from today and see how they thrive and gain weight. 'Kepler' is the finest "food extra" you can buy and all children love its sweet, malty flavour. Your chemist has 'Kepler.'

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(and only this shape)**

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**THE CORRECT-SHAPE NYLON TOOTHBRUSH**

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Lembar**

Available in limited  
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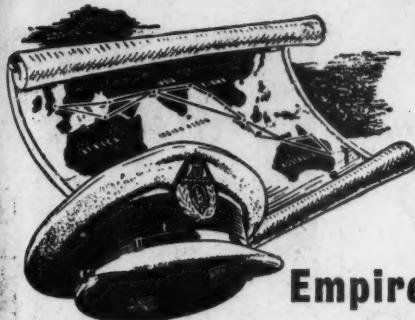
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**Keep it clean  
with FRAM**

(Read.)

Sticky valves and piston rings; undue wear on cylinder bore and bearings; choked up oilways. These are the effects of dirty oil. FRAM Oil Cleaner does far more than filter it. **FRAM KEEPS OIL CLEAN.** Ask your garage.

**Simmonds Aerocessories Ltd., Great West Road, London.**  
A Company of the Simmonds Group



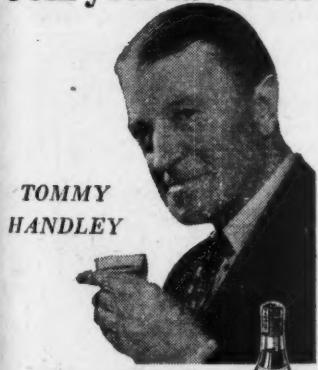
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BRITISH OVERSEAS AIRWAYS CORPORATION B.O.A.C.

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in his favourite  
vermouth

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## Vamour vermouth

"The best you can buy—  
sweet or dry"

VERMOUTIERS (LONDON) LTD., 1885 HOURS,  
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INSISTING  
ON PRE-WAR  
QUALITY"

says  
PAINTER  
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We regret that we have not yet been able to resume normal production of Brolac and Murac because, in order to guarantee the same high pre-war standard in these two first-quality paints, we need a full supply of the special ingredient "Hankol," the raw material of which comes from China.

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DOUBLE PROTECTION PAINT  
with the enamel finish

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(BRISTOL AND LONDON) LTD., BRISTOL.  
London: 1-5, St. Pancras Way, N.W.1



Those were the days.

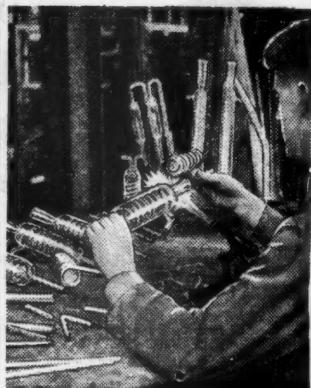


AND THIS WAS THE  
SHOE CREAM

and still is!

ROUYER GUILLET & CO LTD., LONDON.

Don't  
just say  
Brandy.  
say  
**R.G.B.**



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How are PYREX Brand Condensers made? Those intricate spirals... the skilfully sealed interior tubing... the fine glass piping which is fashioned together to form a PYREX Brand Condenser.

What is the secret?

The secret really lies in the skill of the trained craftsman. The large outer cylinder is first fashioned, the interior spiral and smaller tubes are then shaped, assembled and fused together, inserted in the outer casing piece by piece, by glass technicians whose hands possess magic ability, using the meticulous care and precision necessary to ensure that every piece is correctly placed for its specific purpose.



OF COURSE-  
IT'S BRANDED **Trubenised**  
REG. TRADE MARK

The word "Trubenised" is a registered Trade Mark, owned by Trubenised Ltd. It distinguishes fused semi-stiff articles made by leading manufacturers and processed according to the instructions and under the control of Trubenised Ltd.

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The unit being made in the above photograph is PYREX Brand Condenser No. S.9 Inland Revenue Pattern, as illustrated on the right.

Ask for PYREX  
Brand and see  
that you get it!

PYREX Brand Scientific Glassware is supplied only through Laboratory Furnishers, but illustrated catalogue and two free copies of our Chemist's Notebook will be sent direct on application to us, which should be written on trade heading or accompanied by professional card.

### PYREX Brand Scientific Glassware

is made by  
James A. Jobling  
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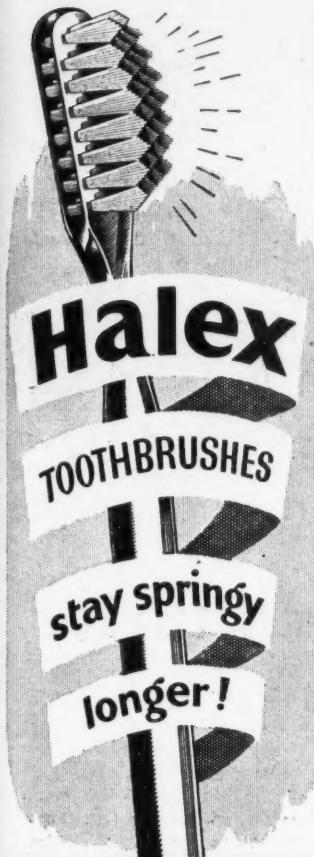
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JOINERY & WOODWORKING  
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**Boulton & Paul Limited**  
NORWICH



December 25 1946.

PUNCH or *The London Charivari*

Jean certainly is a lucky lady . . . for the last seven tiresome years, ironing at least has never bothered her. Her G.E.C. streamlined iron has always seen her through. No wonder her envious friends are keeping a very sharp look-out for all the good things the G.E.C. are planning to provide in the months to come. Ease, efficiency and comfort with "everything electrical"—are on the way.

## G.E.C.

*Electrical Appliances for the Home*

Advt. of The General Electric Co., Ltd., Magnet House, Kingsway, London, W.C.2

### \* TOO YOUNG TO SUFFER \*

My  
mummy  
did it



What would you do? Should the mother have a second chance? Is it safe to leave the child for another week? N.S.P.C.C. inspectors often have difficult, worrying decisions to make, on which the whole future of a young life may depend. The National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children only prosecuted in 1,160 cases out of 41,720 investigated last year. It tries to rebuild family life wherever it possibly can.



IF YOU KNOW OF A CHILD IN TROUBLE, WRITE TO THE

N · S · P · C · C

4 VICTORY HOUSE, LEICESTER SQUARE, LONDON, W.C.2  
OR TO ANY LOCAL OFFICE \* Donations or legacies gratefully received

### EASILY THE BEST since the days of the Victoria



The elite Baby Carriage since 1873. The demand is great but we are doing our best to make supplies available as quickly as possible.

ASHTON BROS & PHILLIPS LTD.  
20 OSNATH WORKS, WARRINGTON



BUT ESCAPE CERTAIN  
for entire Family even from  
highest floor if Automatic DAVY  
is fitted. Average cost £10.  
Write for details.  
JOHN KERR & CO. (Mach) LTD.  
Northwich, Cheshire.  
DAVY Automatic FIRE ESCAPE



Indigestion?  
Ah, Yes!  
— YOU WANT

**MEGGESEN**  
BISMUTH DYSPEPSIA  
TABLETS  
16 AND 3/10

**SPECIAL  
LATHER FOR  
SENSITIVE  
SKIN**  
  
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SHAVING STICK

### SKIN BLEMISHES

There is no need to be a victim of unsightly skin troubles. D.D.D. Prescription provides the remedy, so easily, so quickly, that you would not believe it possible unless you tried it. D.D.D. Prescription is non-greasy, non-staining. No unpleasant smell. No bandages, no dressings. Yet D.D.D. Prescription acts quickly. A few applications show a marked improvement. In thousands of cases a short treatment completely clears all trace of the trouble. D.D.D. Prescription costs 1/5d. a bottle at all chemists.

**D.D.D. PRESCRIPTION**  
FOR ALL SKIN TROUBLES



To-day everyone is yearning for more variety — for more of the goodness and flavour of the '57.'

The housewife wants the full range to be available again — for her choice — in the Grocery Store. They are coming back — one by one.

## HEINZ 57 VARIETIES

Already about: BAKED BEANS, SPAGHETTI, SOUPS, ★  
SALAD CREAM, SANDWICH SPREAD AND PICKLES ★

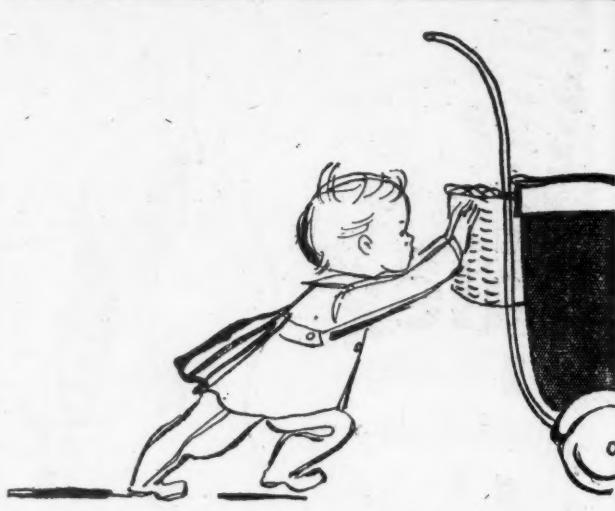
### BRITISH WINES WITH A NAME YOU KNOW "BEHIND" THEM



For over 50 years the name "WHITEWAY" on a label has been a guarantee of purity and quality. When purchasing Whiteway's Port-Style Wines and British Sherry you can be sure that from the time the Grapes are gathered in the Vineyards of the "Sunny South" until the Wine has reached the final stage of blending and maturing at our Winery in "Glorious Devon," the greatest care has been taken in every process of production.

The 'Whiteway' Brand British Wines are sold under the Certificate of The Royal Institute of Public Health and Hygiene.

CVS-87



## Children thrive on Virol

VIROL COMPLETES THE DIET



## PEARS SOAP

We regret that Pears Transparent Soap  
is in short supply just now.

A. &amp; F. Pears Ltd.

GG 786/96



# PUNCH

OR

THE LONDON CHARIVARI



Vol. CCXI No. 5531

December 25 1946

## Charivaria

IT was thought that a provincial production of *Ali Baba* would have to be postponed as the leading man had caught a heavy cold. But at the last minute the management changed the title of the pantomime to *Singbad the Sailor*.

A Canadian wonders what the British people would do if they had a below-zero temperature throughout the winter. Save a great deal more electricity, we fear.



### 1,002nd Tale

"Baghdad—capitol of Iraq and home of the fabulous Arabian Knights—has a Royal College of Medicine. And that institution has an immediate vacancy for two professors." *Vancouver paper.*

A turkey, we read, was left in the waiting-room of a suburban railway station. The explanation may be that the owner had no refrigerator at home.

IT appears that French transport difficulties are, like ours, closely related to labour problems. There seems to be no truth in the rumour, however, that Paris taxi-drivers have adopted a go-slow policy.

A columnist remarks that there was probably a cave shortage when primitive man first began living in them. He doesn't suggest that Stonehenge may have been the first attempt at a prefab.



A cabinet-maker mentions certain varieties of wood which are worth a small fortune to-day. What he doesn't explain is why they are all bought up by log-merchants.

"Vegetarian and Food Reform Guest House in Blundellsands now Open to take business people. Every comfort, conservative cooking."—*Advt. in "Liverpool Echo."*

Ah, but Liberal helpings?

"A good way to get an appetite," says a medical writer, "is to go for a sharp walk in a pair of slacks and an old sweater." Yes, but does he know a good way to get rid of it again?

A sheep which strayed from a farm in Essex during the night was found the next day lying down outside a football ground five miles away. It is thought that, having a touch of insomnia, it wanted to count people going through the turnstiles.

### Good News for Codfish

"Parents of at least 112,000 children will get extra money if Parliament approves the regulations, issued last night by the Ministry of National Insurance as a White Paper."

*"Daily Mirror."*

"A problem of motor travel to-day is how to cram your luggage into a small old-fashioned car," says a writer. One solution is an elastic-sided boot.



## The Poet Under Orders

**S**CORY I'm late," I said, "I've been trying to get some shaving soap."

"Well, get cracking," growled the editor, "our readers are eagerly awaiting your latest dope."

Adding, somewhat unnecessarily I thought—"I hope."

Come, it's opening-time, let's take a stroll  
Or rather a'Gallup round the Hop Pole.

When asked if they thought Christmas this year  
Would be gay or austere,  
74 per cent. said: Depends on the beer.  
25 per cent. said: Hear! Hear!  
1 per cent. said: About as gay as a serenade  
Sung by the Board of Trade.  
We discovered later that One-per-cent. had spent the day  
At the Britain Can't Get It Exhibition at the V. and A.  
And was suffering from a slight attack of frustration—  
What psychiatrists now diagnose as "export exasperation."

Which reminds us that round about 1950 (perhaps)  
You'll be able to equip your house (if any) with spring-loaded taps  
Which can be fitted with new washers (assuming you can obtain  
New washers) without your having to turn the water off at the main.

Meanwhile, until such jolly gadgets materialize, may we suggest  
You continue your subscription to the Snail-Watching Society, Mrs. Haverford-West?

As a Harassed Housewife observes:  
"Watching these little creatures steadies the nerves.  
Moreover, it sets one wondering which of the two  
Has the better acceleration—a snail or a fish-queue."

### Note on Housing.

Mr. Aneurin Bevan is said to get quite hot  
If you ask him what snails have that we haven't got?

And that brings us to some questions not yet discussed  
By the Brains Trust.

Who, in the name of Fuel and Power, wrote "Don't Go Down the Mine, Daddy"?  
Is "absenteeism" a term used by golfers to describe a defaulting caddie?  
What is the precise inner significance of the "closed shop" (other than your tobacconist's)?  
Would it matter two straws, a hoot or an atomic fission if there were no scientists?  
What truth is there in the yarn that an anthropoid ape invented the monkey-wrench?  
In the interests of racing, are you in favour of British horses learning to speak French?  
We know the club bore and the pub bore. Would the Brains Trust please tell us who the Severn bore is?  
Do you believe that the present shortage of footballs was secretly engineered by the Tories?  
What famous colonel, when asked if he preferred his Christmases green or white,  
Replied: "Neither, sir, I am all for a pink-gin Christmas.  
Good night!"

"Sir," said Dr. Johnson, "a good tavern is in itself sufficient reason  
For celebrating the festive or indeed any other conceivable season."  
Boswell: "I couldn't agree more.  
Landlord, encore!"

*Now is the summer of our discontent  
Made glorious winter.*

But only if spent  
At the ROCK BOTTOM HOTEL.  
The hotel nearest the Atlantic swell.  
(*"So near, my dear, I greatly fear  
We'll be actually in it by next year."*)  
Our lounges are spacious,  
Our service vivacious,  
Our guests cry "Good gracious!"  
In jet-propelled lifts;  
You can tango or rumba,  
Play golf or just slumber,  
Our beds (any number)  
Are Lethe's own gifts!  
(*"One word, my dear Dean, describes the cuisine.  
Ah, you are not unfamiliar with the word I mean!"*)  
The Dean titters,  
And orders two gins-and-bitters.)  
The ROCK BOTTOM caters for your every comfort and caprice.  
Come to the ROCK BOTTOM and forget the Peace!  
Amp. accom. wint. sea. ful. lice. cent. heat.  
(*"Well, anyway, darling, you must admit the head waiter was rather sweet."*)

Excuse me, but do your permutations lack vision?  
When filling up coupons do you tremble with indecision?  
Have you ceased to care who's top of the First Division?  
If the answer is Yes, you are definitely ill  
And need a Bigwood's Little Liver Pool Pill.

And now here is our Electronic Eavesdropper, Radar Flittermouse,  
To tell you what "he" overheard in a studio at Broadcasting House.

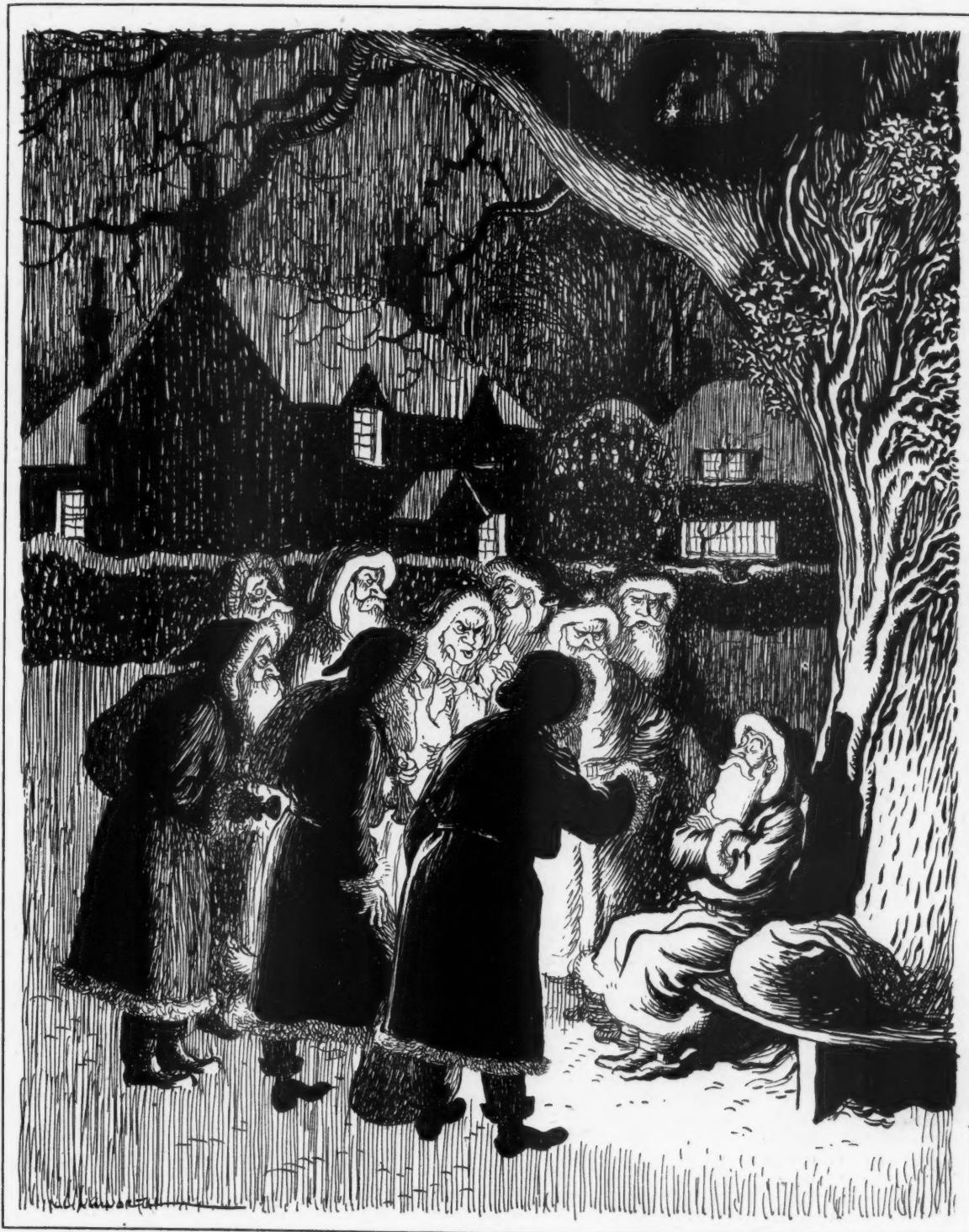
"I'm not in the least surprised, my dear fellow. Oh, quite. That's what comes of a Third Programme marrying a Light. Poor old Purvis! What hope had he of any Home Service."

Lastly, let's draw up our chairs  
To the warm Shinwellian blaze,  
And snug in our coats and furs,\*  
Make-do's from the Bad Old Days,  
Switch on the wireless and hear what bright  
Interesting personalities are In Town To-night.

Good evening, Mrs. Gristle.  
I believe you are a fine performer on the tin whistle?

(Contd. on p. 574)

\*Ed. What rhyming! Chairs—furs. Good lord!  
Us. Sorry—all the best rhymes are going abroad.



### ANOTHER CLOSED SHOP

“Join the Union—or we'll all down sacks.”



*"Quit grumbling, Lefty; you know that export comes first."*

Oh, yes, indeed, and not only me, you understand,  
The whole family plays it. Well, now, that's grand.  
How many are there of you? Well, there's me and Joe  
And Jim and little Alfie and Daisy and Auntie Flo,  
And you should hear Gran'dad after a couple of doubles  
Playing "Drink to me only" and "I'm for ever blowing  
bubbles,"  
And him near ninety. Ah, Gran'dad likes to wet his whistle  
Before he plays it. Good luck to him. Well, now, Mrs.  
Gristle,  
Seeing you've brought your instrument with you, how  
about a tune?  
Don't mind if I do. I'll give you Gran'ma's "signature,"  
"I love the moon."

You describe yourself as a curate, Mr. Joller.  
You don't look very clerical. Where's the "dog-collar"?  
Oh, I'm no parson. I spells it q-u-e-u-e-r-a-t-e.  
An original if somewhat unusual spelling. Well, you see,  
It sort of suits the job I do. And what is the job you do?  
I picks out the most miserable-looking folk in a queue

And tells 'em funny stories — to take their feet off their  
minds,  
If you get me. I get you. And does it? Well, it takes all  
kinds  
To make a world, as the saying goes. Some haven't no sense  
of humour.  
But I gets a laugh now and then. Only this morning a  
rumour.  
Was running round I'd made a dowager duchess laugh  
In a fish-queue. Splendid! I'll bet you were pleased. Not  
'arf  
I wasn't. Well, as I sees it, I reckons we're all sent here  
Into this vale of qupons and queues and no beer  
To cheer up the other bloke, and I reckons I'm not far  
wrong.  
I reckons you're right, Mr. Joller, and thanks for coming  
along.

Carry on, London!  
Hi, taxi! Ho, taxi!  
Hey nonny no taxi!  
Honk! Honk! (and all that).

## The Cosmic Mess

**C**OLOMNS," like corporations, are now acquiring a personality. "This column takes the view . . ." "This column will always stand for freedom . . ." "This column hotly denies . . ."—and so on. Well, this column is going to chatter vaguely. Stand by.

\* \* \* \* \*

Coming out of a well-known London club the other day, this column found a young man staring up at the building with a note-book in his hand. The young man said "What club is this?" This column told him, and then, sniffing burglars, snoopers, writ-servers or what-not, said "Why do you want to know?" The young man said he was a returned soldier (or, as the Americans say shortly, "veteran") studying London for his examination to be a taxi-driver. This column saw in a flash clearly what it had often seen cloudily before. How oft, old column-of-the-world though it is, has it wandered in and out of those dignified dumps in Pall Mall and elsewhere, trying to find the club at which it has been invited to lunch. "Is this the 'Senior Service'?" "No, this is the 'Ladies' Rest.'"—"Is this the Raleigh?"—"No, this is the Cocked Hat."—"Is this the Royal Intellectual?"—"No, sir, this is the Sporting and Dramatic." Why, this column asks, should not the great clubs show their great names, not vulgarly, not boastfully, but clearly, at their doors? The present obscurity is tiresome enough for the ignorant guest: but pity the poor taxi-driver, who is expected to know where everything is, and generally does. We give him intellectual tests severe enough, without deliberately deceiving him.

All this goes for Government Departments too. And let the names, or numbers, of all big buildings be illuminated, so that this column does not stumble into the Royal Scientific Society and say to an indignant porter "Is this the Amalgamated Brewers?"

When times are better and richer this column will shyly suggest yet one more aid for the traveller in London. Illuminate the names of streets, especially side-streets. Why should this column have to stand on tip-toe, lighting matches and cricking its neck, in order to distinguish Medina Gardens from Medina Road? Not to mention—or rather, to mention—once more, the unfortunate taxi-driver.

Is there any man, by the way,

who has to remember so much—and if he forgets, can't look it up in a book?

\* \* \* \* \*

This Administration, it seems, is not very keen on boats. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, it is true, graciously put an end to the purchase-tax on boats, for which due thanks. But the motor-boater gets a mean allowance of petrol in the summer, and none at all in the winter,\* even if, like this old column, he merely wishes to make an occasional sortie to pick up a capsized dinghy's crew or save the life of a waterman or dog. And now they are going to stop supplies of timber to boat-builders. How, this column mildly inquires, do they expect to maintain the maritime aptitude of the Island Race—not to mention an occasional Dunkirk? And is the Boat Race—two years after Victory—to be rowed in old boats?

\* \* \* \* \*

This column invites the co-operation of all walkers of goodwill (and intrepidity) in its campaign to restore the use and respect of "Belisha" pedestrian crossings. This column regards itself as a careful walker: it does its best not to behave as a "jay". If ever it is mown down darting across the road in the wrong place it will make very few complaints. It looks up and down the street till it sees a "Belisha" and virtuously crosses there. What is more, it never claims to cross in front of a bus, and is careful to give ample warning (at least fifty yards) to all other vehicles. It would therefore be almost impossible to exaggerate this column's indignation when the approaching driver still behaves as if this column were a "jay-walker" or an enemy tank, slows down not at all, and even gives this column an insulting hoot. On one occasion, to avoid death on a pedestrian-crossing, this column had to make a skip so athletic and unsuited to its years that it tore the gastrocnemius muscle, and its services were lost to the Navy for six weeks. When these things happen this column (it is told) goes purple. Certainly it shouts in anger at the vanishing vehicle, which sometimes stops. This column then, at the risk of its life, runs after the offender and altercates. Seven times out of ten the driver seems to be completely and genuinely ignorant of Belisha crossings and the law concerning them. One time the driver

knows all right, but is offensive. Twice the driver thinks this column is mad. Every time, this column carefully notes the number of the car, the time and the date. *But it never does anything else.* This column's diary is full of the numbers of offending vehicles whose drivers should have been hauled into court, but never were. Here are a few—ELN— But no, Christmas is coming and this column will be kind. Next year, though, this column gives notice, it will be less lazy and more severe. Every time it will take the names of witnesses and go to court. And it invites all genuine non-jay-walkers to do the same. Let them remember, by the way, that the absence of the orange ball is no excuse. A special Order (or what-not) during the war saw to that. Orange ball or no orange ball, the car's duty is to give way to this column on a Belisha crossing, and to drive at such a speed that it can pull up *before* the crossing, if this column should turn out to be old, lame, blind, or trying its new artificial leg.

For the motorists' benefit, this column would add, if we can establish the sanctity of "non-controlled" Belisha crossings, more jay-walkers may be persuaded to use them and the motorist will have less trouble elsewhere. As it is, many walkers mutter darkly to themselves: "I am just as likely to be killed on a crossing, so why worry?"

This column concludes with another warning. If in the glad New Year there is no improvement in this important department of life this column will organize and lead mass-demonstrations. We will march about the town in columns of twenty and thirty. We will go from Belisha to Belisha and cross them solemnly till the driving chaps begin to take notice. And, as long as we do not "loiter", we shall be lawful.

Walkers of the World, Unite!  
A. P. H.

○ ○

## "Hello, Mater!"

CAN human wrists so bonily out-grow?  
Can cuffs so fray, in twelve short weeks or so?  
Once Seraph-voice, now bull, and now canary—  
Is this my little boy, so tall, so hairy?

\* Apologies. This foot-note has just heard that this is to be relaxed.



*"Bet you can't ride without holding the handlebars AND read your Highway Code."*

### More Observations

STARTING with some observations on critics, I must first point out how many kinds there are to-day—book, theatre, film, art, music, radio and so on. (These last two words, like the word *etc.*, are used for extending any list the writer has come to the end of too soon.) There is also a prevalence nowadays of people known simply as critics and roped in by the newspapers to complain of Government schemes, etc. Sometimes they are experts, when they may get a small darkish photo to one side of their opinion; sometimes they are just ordinary people, when they must be content with their address, so that those living near may burst with unanalysable pride. After they have said their say, non-expert critics go back to the ordinary business of living, coloured, perhaps, by an occasional circular through the letter-box; the experts go on being expert, a formidable occupation generally thought to exempt them from washing up.

But all this, interesting as it is, is getting me away from the subject of the professional critics. First, the book critics. Their main feature is that they know, without being told, whether a book is good or bad. This never fails to impress their readers, who think in their modest way that while they might think a bad book bad—provided they weren't hoodwinked by the fact that it was in print and therefore looked the same as a good book—they would never be able to sound so sure they were right. Another impressive feature of book critics is their recurring tendency to read certain books at a sitting, just like anyone else. The public considers this both keen and human; not quite so keen and human as, say, one post-office assistant buying a book of stamps from another, or a window-cleaner living in a house with clean windows, but a definite setback to cynicism. The public likes, too, the sensible way book critics tell people the price of everything, and the clever way they seem to have read everything that was ever written. But if book critics are hoping I shall say how brave and good they are to read all the books they review,

I must disappoint them. The public has its tough streaks, and considers that reading the books is a critic's job.

With theatre critics we move to a slightly muzzier plane. Ordinary people don't quite know what they think here. They realize that theatre critics see every play for nothing, and close to, but they realize also that to have to write an essay about anything afterwards is to spoil it. (What luck, say the philosophers, that those school essays on the happiest day of our lives were written after the day and caught it unawares.) So, as far as the public can see, when theatre critics say they have enjoyed a play they mean no more than that they would have enjoyed it if they could have gone home quietly after it to their beef-extract sandwiches. At the same time the public realizes that critics have seen and written up so many plays that by now they should really enjoy them; also, being critics—that is, people who can write bits in print which look the same as other bits in print—they wouldn't mind the writing part anyway. You see what I mean by muzziness. About the only thing the public is sure of is that critics are the last people to be fooled by a good line in a bad play, and the first to be annoyed by the hat in front. Film critics are noted for their staying-power and up-to-date vocabularies. As for art and music critics, I need say no more about them than that they know all about either art or music, and that some of their more accidental friends may be just a little bit afraid of them. Radio critics, who through no fault of their own have sprung up comparatively lately, deserve a word or two. The public sums them up as quiet, homely types; homely because they can hardly set foot outdoors without missing something, quiet because otherwise they wouldn't hear. The public likes to imagine them at home, and wonders if their families look to them for a few quick words of praise or blame between items.

Now I have some pithy observations to make about certificates. I don't mean the framed sort in a chemist's shop—pleasant as it is to see that it has the right name on it and that the man behind the counter is the man of solid worth he has always seemed—but the sort my readers have, in their time, possibly won for themselves. Statisticians tell us that the average person—and by average they mean average, nothing fancy—wins over a lifetime the following certificates: one for either easy drawing or easy music, one for some sort of general exam covering things like arithmetic and botany, and one other for anything from shorthand to dog-owning. The interesting feature of certificates is their aptitude for coming to light every so often, and if any of my readers want to anticipate the next occasion I would advise them to look in the drawer where they keep that sort of thing. Some certificates, especially School Certificates, are housed in cardboard cylinders which may be held to the eye like a telescope and squeaked down to notify that the inside has been sighted. When certificates are pulled out and unrolled, they roll up again immediately. This is part of their charm, the rest of it being the opportunity they offer for a good swank before they go back in the drawer.

My readers' thoughts may be straying to school prizes, and I should like to observe that many people believe Scott wrote the *Waverley* novels with an eye to taking the most brilliant prize-winner through the longest school career. Whether *Waverley* novels or (as in some extreme cases) not, school prizes have leather backs and mottled covers, with a gilt stamp on the outside or a label inside—anything to stop their winners using them as birthday presents. It is doubtful whether most school prizes are read less in early life or in later years; I mean, some are stodged through as soon as won and never opened again.

except by someone looking for something else to read; others start life unread, to leap suddenly into favour years after when their owners suddenly realize they have a book they might think they ought to get if they hadn't got it already. Regarding them simply as something won, statisticians say these prizes start at the top and go slowly downhill; for they begin as objects of pride—indeed, on the first morning after they are won they are the sort of pleasant surprise people can give themselves by remembering when they wake up—but as the years go by they slip gradually into a mere possession and end as something we like our friends to be funny about.

My last observation is fairly short, as readers can see by a glance at the print. It is about spectacles. People who wear spectacles occasionally, and are therefore always looking for them, have found that experience has given them a faculty primitive man never had—the power of telling, just by weighing their spectacle-case in their hand, that it is empty. What it has not given them is the feeling that the gloomy satisfaction of being right outweighs the knowledge that now they will have to go and look in all the places they have looked in already.

• • •  
P.T.O.

YESTERDAY, ah, yesterday I saw my eyes  
like sapphires shine.  
Bright they were in the glass that never lies.  
There was no sign  
of yesterday's to-morrow. Clear and cool  
my cheeks rose fair  
to join the placid forehead of the fool;  
and there my hair  
lay in a little curling amber mat;  
no wisps of grey  
threaded the golden tapestry. But that  
was yesterday.  
Yesterday I could face the morning light,  
nor blink at it;  
did I not dance like dervishes all night,  
nor tire a bit?  
My face was not a landing ground for crows  
to park their feet;  
Could I not pick up pencils with my toes?  
My limbs were fleet.  
No coloured unguents in magic pots  
had cast their spells,  
my teeth did not disdain the clotted knots  
of caramels.  
Yesterday I could somersault with ease,  
but, ah, to-day!  
I tried again, and damn it, if you please,  
got stuck half-way.

V. G.

• • •  
Quadraginticate Comes Into Its Own.

"Fourth Assistant Surgeon. Gentlemen desirous of becoming candidates for the above office must be Fellows of the Royal College of Surgeons of England. Candidates will be required to submit to the undersigned 40 copies of applications together with copies of three testimonials not later than 30th November, 1946."

Advt. in "The Times."

TRADITIONAL

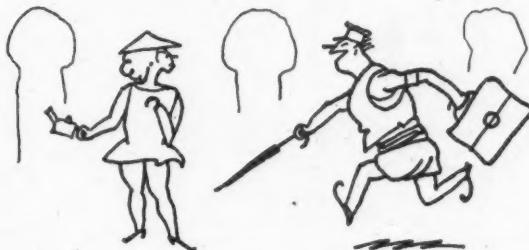
*Of course I haven't seen any of this year's pantomimes yet, but I should guess that—*



*Cinderellas will be very lucky if they get to the Ball without being asked for their union card—*



*that Ali Babas, breaching the cave-doors with "Open, Sesame," will be indeed fortunate if no one points out that that's the worst of them prefabs—*



*that Aladdins can hardly expect to get through the evening without being told by the Slave of the Lamp that he's just been nationalized—*



*and that Sleeping Beauties and their courts cannot possibly hope to avoid being greeted with "Look, Joe, builders!"*

## An Innocent at Large

[*Mr. Punch's special representative is spending a few months in America to find out what is really happening over there.*]

### XII—Hollywood and Mistletoe

I WALKED into Mifflin and Glauber's department store the other day to study the Christmas decorations and to acquire what the advertisement called "pipe appeal." Before I reached the swing doors I became a target for jets of invective from the pickets. "Get wise to 'em, brother, before it's too late," said one young woman. "O.K.," said another, "go ahead and help the gangsters of Wall Street. Why not?" The third mouthful was a near miss. I went right on in, found a well-made London briar and returned to the street to find an ambulance drawn up at the sidewalk. I saw a broken window, a little blood and a tattered placard. A fraction of a second later, *much* farther down the street, I was studying a notice in the window of a cut-price store:

#### SMASHING PRICE INCREASES

There are picket lines everywhere, weary crocodiles shuffling to and fro before the doors of shops, garages, offices and factories. It is very sad. Even Hollywood has its strikes. The latest of them is known technically as a "jurisdictional strike" and nobody can explain the



1947 model, Hollywood

term without repeating it lovingly and proudly dozens of times. I gather, however, that the dispute is about which group of artisans is to knock which nail in where, which group is to upholster which star with what. You see, there are so many different materials involved in film-work—timber, canvas, rubber, wire, plastics and the rest. And you have to buy each one at a closed shop.

I had been warned that the pickets at the Paramount Studios were tough and dangerous—professionals hired for the occasion, that they wore stout chains beneath their trousers (as knee-dusters) and would prod an unwary blackleg in the thigh with very painful results. The studio police had mounted cameras and arc-lamps on the roof with the idea of collecting pictorial evidence of foul play, and the pickets were fighting back with lamps powerful enough to dazzle the cameramen. I got through the lines by a simple stratagem, by waving a copy of this

journal right in the faces of the pickets and thus reducing them to helpless laughter.

Once inside I began to learn my Paramount tables in props, sets, lots, poles, rods and perches. There are seventeen sets to one lot, I do know. Somebody explained the difference between a producer and a director (it had puzzled me for years) and I found it astonishingly simple. A producer is the man who . . . well, no, let's start with the director. He's the chap who sits in the chair stencilled DIRECTOR and . . . oh, if you know already what's the use of my taking all this trouble? . . .

Somewhere between sets (or lots) eight and nine I ran into Miss Dorothy Lamour, and for a few seconds she blinked as though she had found a new leading man. But it was only the effect of bright Californian sunshine in her gorgeous eyes and on the back of my neck. When we two parted I kicked up a small piece of the roadway where she had been standing and stuffed it into my wallet.

Mr. Cecil B. de Mille told me about a new picture called *Unconquered*, a story of war with the Indians, set in the year 1764 and glorious Technicolor. He thought it would help Anglo-American relations. Mr. Gary Cooper and Miss Paulette Goddard are its stars, with Sir Aubrey Smith and Messrs. Wilcoxen, da Silva and Kellaway, but without a few of the Indians left in America. The Paramount lot (or set) seemed like a vast reservation and everybody spoke in "Ughs." It made me sweat merely to look at the coppery injuns in their glycerine and war-paint and very carelessly I invited one of them to have a drink. I did not know of course that in doing so I had committed a crime punishable by ten years in Sing Sing. After protesting vehemently against such a shabby, selfish law (suppose we did that to the Celts or Jutes!) I downed a couple of stiff Bourbons just to show them.

Across the road in set (or lot) 14 I saw half an automobile being driven at a mad pace along an Arizona road by a fugitive killer, Mr. John Hodiak. The barren scenery flashed by on a screen while a man on a box swished realistic shadows across the killer's face with a branch of pepper tree. Technicians tilted the contraption as it rounded awkward bends and make-up men brought beads of hot vaseline to Mr. Hodiak's furrowed forehead. The English director, Mr. Lewis Allen, smoked incessantly and talked wisely about our Test Match chances. *Desert Town* should be worth seeing.

I could go on boasting like this for a very long time—about "a drama for Barbara Stanwyck and David Niven," for example, now being made at the Enterprise Studios. A pretty picture, with one of those queer, enigmatic titles we get so often these days—*The Other Love*. But I must tear myself away from the set (or lot) and dash through the picket lines.

Sir Aubrey and Lady Smith live high in the Beverly Hills on a perch of rock and a pedestal of fame. From the lawn, which resembles the "square" or "table" at Lord's, there is a view across the barren rusty hills to the blue Pacific and the island of Catalina. The weather-vane must puzzle Americans: it is in the shape of a cricket-bat. Sir Aubrey's whimsical "Palais des Poulets" houses a score of handsome white layers, every one of them as dignified and talented as the actresses whose names they have adopted—Irene Vanbrugh, Fay Compton, Ellen Terry, Lilian Braithwaite, Greta Garbo, Ethel Barrymore and

the rest of a brilliant constellation. All of them at some time or other have played "opposite" the old maestro. But not so old. A few months ago, at the age of eighty-three, he flew in a tiny plane (from which most of the controls had been removed to accommodate his large frame) to welcome the R.A.F. Goodwill Mission. And he still knows how to handle a cricket-bat. (By the way, I am beginning to realize what fun it must be to run a chatter column.)

May I remind old cricketing codgers of the Gents. v. Players match of 1888? The Players needed six\* runs to win with four wickets in hand. W. G. Grace was crouching at point, Sammy Woods and Aubrey Smith were bowling.



The crowd had left the terraces and only a few stalwart spectators remained in or near the Tavern. Woods bowled Attewell, Smith bowled Peel and the tail collapsed. It is six thousand miles and nearly sixty years from Beverly Hills to that remarkable victory, but I didn't miss a ball bowled from Sir Aubrey's memory. His latest picture, as I said before, is *Unconquered*.

Now let me tell you that Hollywood is pretty scared about the recent spectacular progress of the British film industry. And admits as much. So the British colony grows and native technicians greet the traveller with "Blimey, not another limey!" At one studio I arrived just as a wet little party was getting under way. An Italian Jew was celebrating his success, after ten years of fuss and bother, in achieving American citizenship. At a somewhat blurred and elementary level we discussed the economics of film-making and he asked why Britain hadn't borrowed from Mr. J. Arthur Rank instead of "touching" America for the big loan.

The trouble with Hollywood, as I see it, is that the place has been written about too often and from too many angles for my comfort. The Russian journalist Ilya Ehrenberg has made himself very unpopular by dubbing America's civilization "cheap" and "tinsel." At the risk of my reputation and accusations of plagiarism I will say that Hollywood may be tinsel but is certainly not cheap. I paid three shillings and sixpence for a shave and a nicked ear, five shillings for one chicken sandwich and sixpence for a newspaper clearly marked threepence (five cents). Beverly Hills is a different matter. My guide rushed along one avenue after another pointing out the homes of the stars. Whenever he stopped you could hear the splash

\* Protests of a statistical nature should be addressed to the Editor, whose decision, let me tell you, is final.

of colour in the swimming pools, the stately tread of borzois trooping in to lunch, the popping of champagne corks and that dreadful crashing of old china which heralds an attack of incompatibility of temperament. Almost every house had a rally of cars in its drive and even from the roadway I could see the word "lawyer" on their windscreens.

In the intervals between pictures and husbands many film stars find rest and peace at the Beverly Hills Hotel—a nice enough spot if you can make do with only two swimming pools. The brochure advertising its charms (I stayed there just long enough to snatch a copy from under the nose of the deputy under-manager) is written in the best scenario-style English. "Not so long ago," it says, "this was all a dreamy Spanish domain . . . Spanish grandes rode their horses, idled around and strummed their guitars for their fabulously beautiful doñas. Life was all a song and everyone was happy . . ."

Expecting some tragic climax I read on. But no, everyone is *still* happy in this "verdant oasis," this peaceful haven "set in the heart of city traffic." Yet there are goings-on, to be sure—"While it is indeed calm and restful . . . it is never too much so." There is no winter here, only a "winter" in inverted commas. There is "a fine stretch of white silica sand for sand-loafers" and (probably) a fine stretch of yellow quarryite sand for those



" . . . and thou beside me in the wilderness . . . "

who prefer it, with bits of bottle-glass, newspapers and ice-cream cartons strewn about realistically.

The service is astounding. For next to nothing you can have "limousines with chauffeur guides," "foreign-speaking governesses or ladies' maids," "a game of ping-pong"—everything. The Polo Room is "cool, confidential and romantic," the cuisine is "our chief interest, our primary charm," the bungalows are "hidden away . . . very private and secluded." The word bungalow suggests a Portal, doesn't it? Well, forget it. Here "walls of Chinese grass cloth reach from grey carpeting to a ceiling of combed wood . . . covered in chartreuse and adobe tan . . . curtains of checkered taffeta in sun-bonnet blue, pom-pom yellow and cranberry red." And above all, "there's nothing transient or temporary about the atmosphere." You can go on hour after hour, day after day, filling your lungs over and over again with air—and never the slightest fear of a shortage. Does that make your mouth water? I'm sorry, honestly I am.

HOD.

## Royal Broadcast

DOWN from the Royal Standard  
The six leopards stole,  
And the lion of Scotland dropped its  
paws  
And clambered down the pole;  
And lion and leopards together  
Went down the Mall for a stroll.

This was no common lion,  
No common leopards these,  
And the people, glad to see them pass,  
Felt wholly at their ease,  
And the harp above in its fourth quarter  
Burst into melodies.

Out through the Horse Guards into Whitehall  
The royal creatures went,  
They glanced for a moment at Downing Street

And the Houses of Parliament,  
And onward then by London river  
Their stately steps they bent.

Sometimes they paused by a back-street window,  
Well lit with Christmas cheer;  
They spoke a message of royal greeting  
And of hope for the coming year,  
Till the four winds caught and carried their  
message  
To the whole world far and near.

Back by the Mall they sauntered  
To the palace of the King,  
And each regained its place on the Standard  
With one great single spring,  
And the golden harp in the fourth quarter  
Fell quiet and ceased to sing.







## The Three of Me

I SHOULD say off-hand that the amount of good I do by a word in season to chance acquaintances is well nigh incalculable. Perhaps I am peculiarly qualified to help. I was greatly pleased, therefore, to meet a hard-pressed bookman the other night in the Blue Duck Inn, of all places.

He was alone until I sat at his table. He kept taking a small book from his pocket and reading the same few lines. Then he would mumble under his moustache and drum his fingers furiously on his bowler. He was obviously in distress. I gave him my encouraging smile and he responded at once.

"Speakin' as man to man," he said anxiously, "how many would you say was sittin' at this 'ere table?"

"Why, two of course—you and I."

"That's what I thought. This 'ere book says there's six of us: three of me and three of you."

He handed me *The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table*.

"It's quite simple, really," I smiled, after reading the passage. "In a sense there are three of you. First, there's the real you. Second, there's your own fanciful opinion of yourself. You're not the man you think you are."

"Ho, I ain't, ain't I?" he retorted, bridling.

"No. Thirdly, there's what I think you are."

"I don't want no back-chat from you," he said in a nasty tone. "You're no oil-painting, if it comes to that, done up ridiculous with that there towel round your neck."

I ignored the remark. He was referring of course to the shawl I wear in the winter. I wind it three times round my neck and hang the end down my back. I find it lends a certain distinction to my profile—a rather subtle blend of the intellectual and the rowing Blue.

"That's just the point," I continued blandly. "What you think I am is only one aspect of me. There is also what I think I am, and finally, what I really am. That makes six altogether."

At this point a stranger joined us at our table.

"There's nine of us now," complained my friend. The stranger looked up sharply. "Would you mind sitting somewhere else? It's quite complicated enough with six of us here."

The stranger got up and spoke to the innkeeper, who came over to us.

"What's going on here?" he demanded sternly. "I'm surprised at you, Bert—an old customer like you!"

"He began it!" exclaimed Bert hotly. "I was sitting here quiet, reading me book, and he started making nasty remarks."

"Not at all," I interposed. "I was merely explaining a rather interesting point in psychology. It applies equally to you. Actually, there's three of you."

The innkeeper beckoned two assistants.

"First, there's the real you," I went on, undeterred. "Then there's your own opinion of yourself. None of us can see ourselves as we really are."

"Just what I was thinking," said the innkeeper pointedly.

"Finally, there's my opinion of you, which—"

"You're a fine one to talk, in that rig-out!" roared the innkeeper. "Why don't you buy a hat your own size, for a start?"

Another irrelevance of course. So many people are slaves to fashion. I like my hats slightly on the small side, with the brim turned up all round. I have a fairly massive head, and such hats show it off to advantage, as well as adding a touch of dignified Bohemianism.

"Nasty interfering busybody," muttered Bert.

I rarely lose my temper, but I felt that this was going too far. It stung me. I jumped to my feet and drew myself up to my full five feet one.

"Did you address that remark to me, sir?" I sneered icily.

"Yes, I did," shouted Bert. "All three of you!"

"Chuck 'em both out," said the innkeeper to his assistants. "The whole six of 'em."

I was going then in any case. I hate brawls. The incident did, however, bring a rather pleasing picture to my mind. I must certainly re-read that book. The part of the autocrat, discoursing with such charm and erudition, would, I think, suit all three of me perfectly—if I can find the right audience.

○ ○

### Absolutely Unique

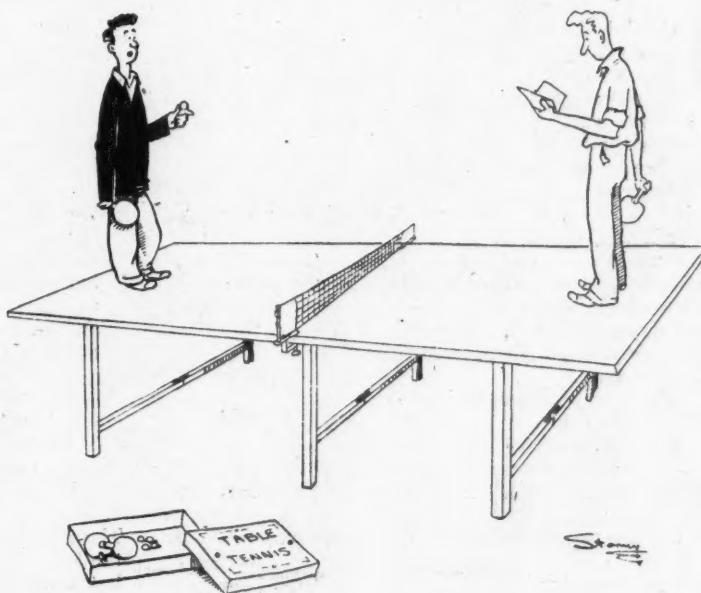
"Lost, long fur, cream bitch. Saturday last. Dead or alive, answers Chubby."

*Advt. in Bournemouth paper.*

○ ○

"Bradman gave Toshack only one over, when he brought on Miller, who proved a very tough proposition. Almost every ball he sent down hit both Washbrook and Edricho."—*Daily paper*.

Is this cricket?



"What does it say about how to serve?"



*"Now remember, dear, don't say anything that will get you involved."*

### *The Night the Star Shone.*

THE night the Star shone  
our people do say  
the King of the Egyptians  
lost his way:  
he lost his way  
following the Star,  
wherefore to seek it  
we wander afar.

You'll find therefore,  
the world over, no trace  
of hoar-frost or gipsies nine days in one place:  
all roads, in all lands,  
in all weathers we know:  
our camp-fires burn in sweet grass  
as in snow.  
(Holly or whitethorn,  
alder or oak  
are good woods—  
and pine for the scent of its smoke  
but not for heat. A sweet birch fire burns  
clean:  
but ash when green is fire for a queen.)

We came long ago  
out of the East,  
wanderers, keeping  
this wisdom at least:

to understand, without spoken word,  
the call of each bird  
and the ways of each beast:  
to feed our mares  
in another man's meadow  
and tell what o'clock  
by a flower or a shadow;

We pitch our tents  
by the roadside—  
not of black felt as of old, or tanned hide,  
but of canvas and rags  
to keep out the wind,  
and hooped, like the dwellings  
of all of our kind.

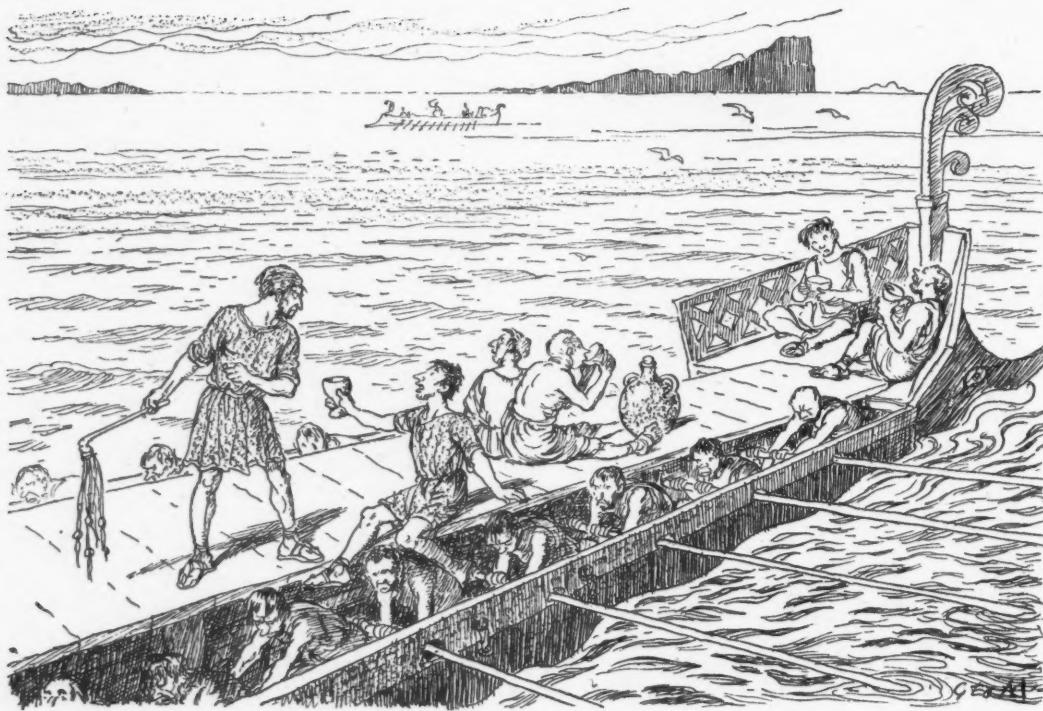
(At nightfall content  
with what we have got—  
a hare, or a rabbit,  
and herbs for the pot:  
the gowns of our women, dyed with strong dyes,  
bright in the firelight. Dark are their eyes.)

The night the Star shone  
the king's heart was gay—  
but long ago, long ago  
he lost his way  
or found it maybe, following the Star.  
Who knows the answer? We seek it afar.

R. C. S.



THE UNIVERSAL UNCLES



*"Not just now for me, thanks. I have to drive."*

## Reply, Reply

**A**T considerable cost of time and trouble, we have secured a Christmas interview with the celebrated publicist and what-not, Mr. Wardcage Burke. We put to him a number of searching questions, and our interview is printed in the form of a straggling mess of his replies to these questions, because that is less exhausting to us, or (if you insist) to me.

Our first searching question is printed in italics (the italics are ours; we got millions of 'em) below, and the second searching question follows, after leaving by an ingenious arrangement a space of exactly the right size for Mr. Burke's answer, in roman characters (we got millions of those, too), to the first.

*If this were not Christmas, what season would you wish it to be?*

Christmas.

*What do you consider the severest test of a radio announcer?*

The reading of a perfectly obvious and ordinary piece of news, couched in the most hackneyed and familiar phrases, with an air of faintly blundering surprise, as if it were a tough and subtle epigram being moulded on the spot from nebulous ideas. I was lately much impressed by the performance of one announcer who contrived a dubious pause of very nearly three seconds between the two identical halves of Scotland Yard's telephone number.

*Do you approve of Zoos?*

They may have their uses, but not, I think, not in the

realm of natural history or biology—in the long run. Zoo animals can give you progressively less and less information about their species. Each one as it is caught represents only that inevitably dwindling sub-branch of a species that possesses and transmits through the generations the natural tendency to fall into the traps set on behalf of zoos.

*Do you recognize the logical fallacy in that reply?*

Certainly. But it would bore your readers stiffer if I explained it.

*How do you know they haven't had time to think it out for themselves?*

What—with all that queueing?

*Can you offer our readers any Golden Rule for social behaviour at Christmas?*

I can offer them one Golden Rule for social behaviour at any time. It is a small, specialized one and only touches the fringe of one branch of social behaviour, but it ought to help. It is this: Never tell a story that depends for most of its effect on the time and place in which, or the person to whom, it is told.

*Why?*

Because if you do, then at some quite unsuitable time and place, and in the presence of other quite unappreciative persons, someone will eagerly insist that you repeat it.

*Have you any example of such a story in mind?*

My mind gets more crammed with them every day. It worries me sometimes.

*Do you consider the Englishman a good loser?*

I have several thoughts on this subject, but they are so conditional and alternative that I almost despair of making clear to your readers—

*Oh, go on, 'ave a bash.*

Very well. I think the Englishman is a good loser always provided that everybody else obviously *notices* that he is being a good loser. Alternatively, provided that *nobody* else seems to notice that the other side has won. Alternatively again, I think he is a good loser because he fails to notice until the very last moment that the other side is winning, at which point he hesitates to admit that he had not realized it before.

*Could you make any general observation about Life?*

*Are you kidding?*

*No, really. What strikes you most as you grow older?*

Well, it's another small point, but of universal application. What strikes me most as I grow older is the surprisingly large number of people who reach a surprisingly advanced age without ever becoming aware of the undeniable fact that feeling absolutely certain—but *absolutely certain*—is no proof.

*Do you agree that a certain indefinable resemblance between nearly all new film players, men and women, in their first*

*films, is probably traceable to the fact that they have not yet quite got used to wearing porcelain caps on their teeth?*

You took the very words out of my mouth.

*This is probably about all our readers can stand at the festive season, but would you care to sum up the interview?*

The most remarkable thing about this interview seems to me to be the way you kept asking me questions which I was all ready to answer.

*Would you say this coincidence was accidental?*

Yes—or my name isn't Birdcage Walk.

*What is your name?*

Wardcage Burke.

R. M.

• • •

### Very Wrong Number

IN common with my fellow men  
I find myself connected

To numbers which are now and then

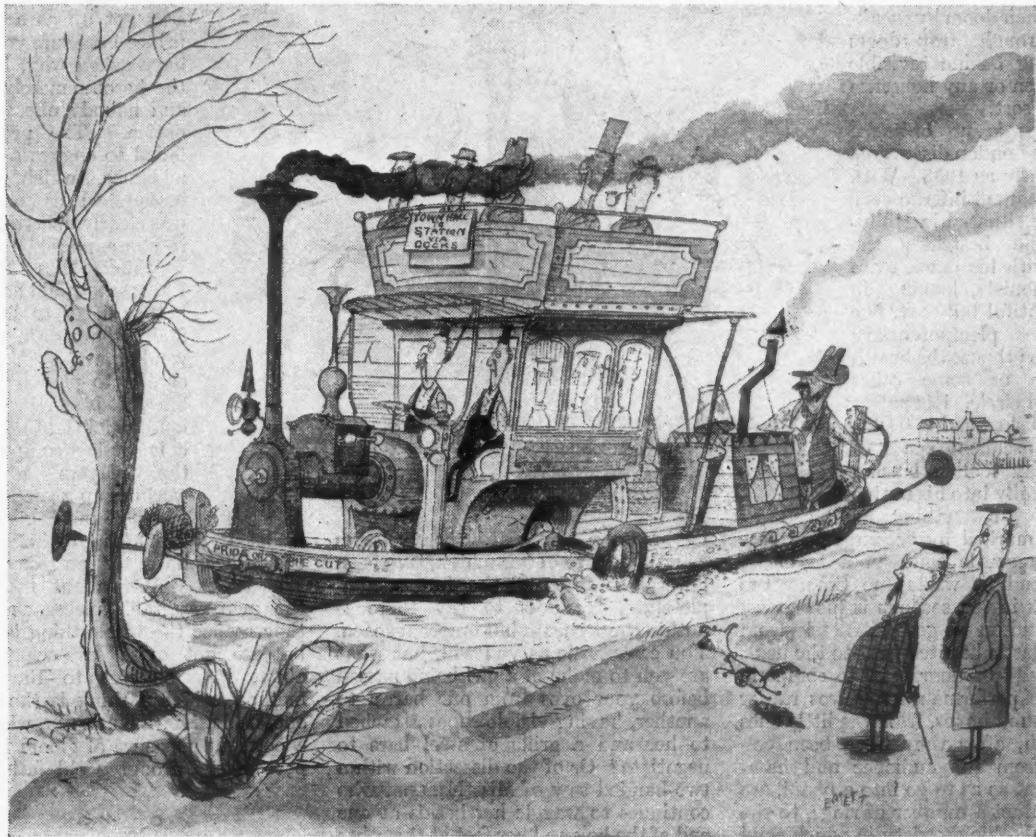
Entirely unexpected.

In many cases, I agree,

The differences are small,

But when I dial LIBerty

Why should I get WHItehall? M. H.



*"There you are—that's what they SAID they'd do: Railways, Road Services and Canals, all lumped together."*

## At the Play

## "SIM-SALA-BIM" (GARRICK)

THE material-minded wretches who keep on muttering "She's been slipped down the hollow table-leg" and "It isn't a baby pig at all but an arrangement of shaving-mirrors" seem to me to miss all that is best in magic. Mr. Punch's Artist and I were surrounded by them, and in contrast our childlike simplicity shone out like a beacon. There was only one moment, of which afterwards I felt slightly ashamed, when I impudently imagined I had a line on the arrival of some roses on a bloomless shrub, and no doubt I was wrong. It is wonderfully refreshing to relax all vigilance and allow the waves of mystery to lap over one freely. If ladies are to be sawn in half then I like them to be sawn in half and not to dodge their doom by sneaking through trap-doors or hiding behind invisible policemen or any nonsense of that sort.

DANTE is no ordinary fakir, as London discovered as recently as 1938. With his permanent inferno very suitably situated in Hollywood he bestrides the globe with his crack team of illusionists, looking, in his beautiful tail-coat, like a rosy plenipotentiary about to propose the health of Uno or some other charmed circle. His patter is as polished as his tricks, an inconsequent spate of Broadway fooling lapsing occasionally into his native Danish. Everything he does is marked by accomplished ease and the gentle smile of a favourite uncle, and he wastes no time. Ten surprises in ten seconds is his modest claim, and on we go breathlessly from one fantastic bewitchment to the next.

It would be ungrateful to complain that the performance revolves rather much round boxes, from the little ones in which, after they have been collected from the audience and hammered flat so as to go into a pistol, are found intact a number of rings, to the large or bathing variety in which solid flesh evaporates and psychic phenomena are manifested which make the Drummer of Tedworth and the famous goings-on at Hinton Ampner seem very

small ale; for boxes are DANTE's main stock-in-trade and there is no lack of variety in what he does with them. When Miss Moi Yo MILLER, his charming A.D.C., is locked in a chest we are not surprised that a single toot on his whistle is enough to transfer her to a tiny case, not much larger than a sewing-machine, which comes rumbling down a wire from the gallery inside another, stoutly fastened; nor can we do anything but goggle when a lady climbs into one of those long flat drawers in which one keeps trousers and is subsequently found still smiling

similarly graceful feet must be introduced into the lower part of the box; but when, and, above all, how?

Away from his boxes DANTE is equally brilliant, whether enviably conjuring stout from an empty barrel supported on an open trestle or levitating bodies, cards and metal balls, *round which he passes hoops*. He is undoubtedly a great man. Children, you have been warned!

## "FATAL CURIOSITY" (ARTS)

This (by GEORGE LILLO) is interesting as a museum-piece, not least because Fielding put it on in 1736 during his brief tenure of the French theatre in the Haymarket, but it scarcely justifies resurrection. Straight drama with a preposterous romantic plot, it leaves no less than three-sevenths of the cast wallowing in pools of blood after the count; if your sweetheart had come back from the high seas got up as a Moorish prince I am sure you would have asked why, but here the heroine merely swoons and nobody else seems to notice. The production failed to engage a modern audience, which, though it laughed a good deal, was clearly uncertain when it was supposed to do so. I think Miss BEATRIX LEHMANN would have done better either to burlesque it unashamedly, when it would have been funnier, or else to play it full out for all it is worth, with the loud pedal right down. As it is she has compromised, the players sometimes working up a good rhythm of blood-and-thunder only

to let it down again by pausing on the sillier lines for an easy laugh. The ladies flutter about too much, the men say their pieces as though they realize the whole thing is absurd but are not quite sure what to do about it. Nearest to the all-out method, which I think is the correct one, is Mr. HUGH GRIFFITH, who packs a powerful measure of gloom into the part of the drooping old father.

ERIC.



"AND WHEN THE THING THAT COULDN'T HAS OCCURRED . . ."—Kipling.

DANTE

in three dimensions after heavy boxes containing two of her mates have been lowered so as to fill the drawer completely. Needless to say there is nothing underneath but innocent space. You can puzzle as you will, but what are you to make of a girl being passed before your eyes from one barrel to another, having visible ropes attached to her and a grille of steel bars to negotiate? Or of the dissection with a two-handed saw of Miss MILLER, who continues to waggle her hands at one end of the box and her feet at the other after it has been cut in two? Since Miss MILLER is afterwards happily restored to us it is within our power to reason that at some point another girl with

"There is a wider distribution of money. There are fewer counter-attractions than before the war."—*Daily paper*.  
Yes, but under the counter—

## Masque and Music

"THE FAIRY QUEEN"  
(COVENT GARDEN)

It is good to see so truly English an entertainment as PURCELL's *Fairy Queen* on the stage of Covent Garden. Its starting-point is *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and to hear the discourse of Shakespeare's fairies in such a setting is to understand one of the reasons why opera in England has remained an exotic. How can music add anything to such fairies, particularly when *Titania* is MARGARET RAWLINGS, and *Oberon* ROBERT HELPMANN? Could a Mendelssohn or a Weber write such fairy music as:

"Over hill, over dale,  
Thorough bush, thorough brier,  
Over park, over pale,  
Thorough flood, thorough fire,  
I do wander every where  
Swifter than the moone's sphere"?

PURCELL did not attempt it. With so rich and subtle a medium as the English language and the genius of a Shakespeare to fashion it the Englishman did not need music to express himself as did the Italian.

The present production at Covent Garden is a much shortened and carefully adapted version of the original, which, in common with nearly all masques of its time, contained much inferior verse by contemporary writers. The quarrel of *Oberon* and *Titania* and the episode of the Clowns is the thread on which the entertainment is hung, and it provides an uninterrupted succession of colour and movement, from the fanfare that heralds the rise of the curtain to the final tableau. There are fairy forests, enchanted lakes where real fountains play, a classic grove and a Chinese garden. The Chorus, dressed in Restoration style, stand in four boxes on either side of the proscenium (which must be very exhausting). Each scene of Shakespeare is followed by a splendid transformation and divertissement, with dancing and singing. FREDERICK ASHTON is the choreographer. There is a bird ballet in the tree-tops, for which PURCELL has provided delightful bird-music. There is an echo dance in the woods and a dance of spirits of the air, both so beautiful as to make one hold one's breath lest such delicacy and grace of sound and movement should vanish like a bubble. The larger ballets—the *Masque of Night* and the *Masque of the Seasons* with *Phæbus* sitting majestically enthroned in the background—were excellent.

We could have done without the Chinese garden.

Altogether it is a wonderful production, a kind of super-pantomime rivalling any spectacle we have had in London for years. The one weakness is the solo singing, but the dearth of singers is no novelty. CONSTANT LAMBERT adapted the original version of the masque and conducts the orchestra. The scenery and costumes are by MICHAEL AYRTON, and the Sadler's Wells Ballet are at their best.

## THE DELIUS FESTIVAL

The Delius Festival ended with a performance at the Albert Hall of *A Mass of Life*, given by the B.B.C. Symphony Orchestra and Choral Society and a quartet of able soloists. The conductor was Sir THOMAS BEECHAM. *A Mass of Life*, a setting of words taken from NIETZSCHE's *Thus spake Zarathustra*, is a very impressive work, and represents DELIUS at the height of his powers. It is also very long, and there seems to be no reason why it should ever stop. There are moments in it of very great beauty—pagan, sensuous beauty—such as the wordless chorus at the beginning of the Hymn of Life; the midday music, that reminds one of Debussy's *Après-Midi d'un Faune* and is nowise inferior to it; the eerie mystery of the night music; and, most beautiful of all, the mountain music, where distant horn-calls echo from shadowy valleys and mountain-tops, cold, clear and remote.

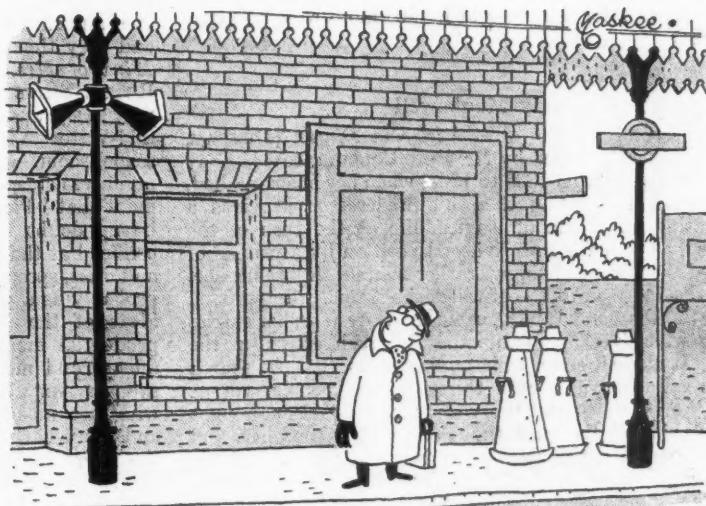
Yet *A Mass of Life* leaves one with a sense of horror. There is an

evilness in NIETZSCHE's poetry for all its wonderful and rich imagery. Though none of his repellent philosophy appears in the text, which is a pagan rhapsody, the scorn and hatred of mankind are there none the less. "Lo, this crown of the Laughing One, this fair garland of roses I have set on my own head! I myself pronounce holy my laughter; none other found I strong enough to do the same." The scornful laughter of the Superman finds no echo in the music, for DELIUS makes no attempt to dramatize the words. They float along like poisonous blossoms on the limpid stream of exquisite sound, a treatment which adds to one's feeling of horror. DELIUS did not live long enough to see turned into horrifying reality the notion of the self-styled Superman armed with a whip with a mysticism founded on bestiality and accompanied by maudlin sentimentality; but if he had tried to show it in all its vileness he could not have succeeded better than he has unwittingly done in *A Mass of Life*.

Of all the works that Sir THOMAS has given us in the course of the Festival, we found that old friends like *The Song of the High Hills*, *Appalachia*, and *Sea-Drift* were the most acceptable.

D. C. B.

SHE stands beneath the mistletoe  
That hangs about at Yule;  
And as she waits she reckons up—  
"If Roger doesn't, Hugh'll."



"Mr. Jones—let go of my hand this instant!"



### Our Booking Office (By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks)

#### Higher Education

No woman has ever produced an attractive feminine variant of *Tom Brown's Schooldays*—and no woman, one suspects, eyer will. It is what Lowood, for instance, failed to do, not what it did, that makes the early pages of *Jane Eyre* memorable. That, perhaps, is why the trilogy now reprinted as *A London Family* (OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS, 15/-) tends to sag in the middle. Mrs. M. V. HUGHES, one of the extraordinarily well-educated women of the Beal-and-Buss period, would have been, scholastically, a typical product to-day. She is mildly critical of the North London Collegiate School of the eighties; but she tends to criticize it for its possible merits—such as the complete absence of boys' games—rather than for its obvious inferiority to her own highly gifted home. The Canonbury household of 1870 or so—the beautiful, sagacious, enterprising mother, in charge of four boys, a girl and a financially undependable husband—is the pick of the book. The girl's own happy courtship and marriage, in the third volume, echo the theme of the first with appropriate variations. And if the domestically static Victorian's capacity for producing loveliness and brains is still in doubt, a comparison of the photograph of "My Mother" with that of Miss Buss should induce more realistic after-thoughts.

H. P. E.

#### Lady Monkswell

This second volume of *A Victorian Diarist* (MURRAY, 16/-), excellently edited by Mr. ERIC COLLIER, covers Lady Monkswell's life from 1895 to 1909, when her husband died. Even more interesting than its predecessor, it gives a fascinating panorama of English life at the turn of the century, as seen from a privileged position by a woman of decided character and shrewd rather than subtle intelligence. After the Jameson Raid—of which she strongly disapproved—and the Diamond Jubilee, came the Boer War, her entries during which vividly picture the dismay it caused at the time. It made it easier to bear, she writes, that she shared her dreadful anxiety with thirty million people, yet at times the very fact that every creature she met or thought of was thinking the same thoughts overwhelmed her, and seemed to cover the sky. The death of Queen Victoria at the beginning of 1901 affected her even more profoundly. How the whole system of things had come to be symbolized by the Queen, and how with her death went the sense of security and permanence, is conveyed in "I had not yet heard the dreadful word 'King' . . . I thought I could bear

it better there [at a service in Westminster Abbey] than anywhere." Occasionally, with a rather moving effect, an entry reveals a consciousness of other worlds than hers, as when she remarks on the memoirs of Sophie Kowalewski, the Russian mathematician—"It has revealed to me my ignorance (tho' I knew of that before), and my extraordinarily happy lot."

H. K.

#### Athens Goes to Law.

As sheer entertainment Athenian litigation must have been hard to beat. Most public-school boys remember Aristophanes' juryman whose son had to lock him up lest he should spend his days in the courts; and there are vivid glimpses of litigious Athens in Aristotle's "Rhetoric." In *The Murder of Herodes and Other Trials from the Athenian Law-Courts* (MACDONALD, 12/6) Dr. KATHLEEN FREEMAN most pleasingly translates a representative fifteen trials, with an admirable introduction and comments. These trials are momentous now: because the relation of the individual to Law—a thing above the state—is the acid test of democracy. Moreover, owing to the conditions of Athenian procedure, they are still amazingly alive. The litigants spoke for themselves; but the greatest rhetoricians of the day wrote their speeches—and, to a certain extent, in character. The *logographos* Lysias has nine trials to his credit, ranging from the defence of a murderer to that of a farmer accused of grubbing up a sacred olive-stump. Demosthenes, whose oratory was predominantly enlisted over affairs of state, figures in two minor charges and (dubiously) in "Against Nearea," a crime story with the genuine Yellow Press flavour. It is an amazing miscellany; and as there are no recorded verdicts, readers—legal and lay—can exercise their minds over their own solutions.

H. P. E.

#### Mrs. Sherwood

Mrs. Sherwood, who wrote more than three hundred and fifty books, is remembered nowadays only as the authoress of *The History of the Fairchild Family*, which appeared in 1818, with the sub-title "The Child's Manual, being a collection of stories calculated to show the importance and effects of a religious education." In her interesting and very thoroughly documented biography, *The State of Mind of Mrs. Sherwood* (MACMILLAN, 7/6), Miss NAOMI ROYDE SMITH plausibly suggests that "the commercial prosperity and social ruthlessness that characterize the mid-Victorian age" had their origin in the nurseries and school-rooms where, between 1812 and 1850, the infant mind was steeped in moral stories exemplifying the standpoint that "Piety is the best Policy." There can certainly be no doubt that the piety of the great Evangelicals, confined at the beginning of the century to a definite type and class, spread all over England in the next few decades, probably as a prophylactic against the socially subversive ideas of the French Revolution. In this diffusion of prudential morality Mrs. Sherwood was the leading influence and most untiring worker. Personally, however, she was very charming and affectionate. Her relations with her husband and children were genuinely happy, and towards the close of her life she got into trouble with the Worcester Evangelicals through maintaining that in due time all mankind would be saved. Yet, in her published writings, as Miss NAOMI ROYDE SMITH abundantly illustrates, she persisted till the end in exposing and denouncing the inexhaustible corruptions of human nature.

H. K.

## Drawings Old and New

The masters of the nineteenth-century English school of water-colour painting were for the most part simple, kindly fellows, with few interests outside their art. Though, as Anatole France remarked, "There is much to admire in an ordinary person," a man whose adventures were chiefly confined to painting hardly merits a full-length biography; and Mr. ADRIAN BURY was wise to content himself with an admirable biographical sketch of *John Varley of the "Old Society"* (F. LEWIS, £5 5s.) and allow the founder-member of the old Water-Colour Society to proclaim his genius through some seventy reproductions of landscape and architectural compositions which are no less enchanting for their debt to Claude, and occasional echoes of Girtin. Early in his career Varley toured Wales and stored his memory with romantic visions of mountains, torrents, leaning trees, ruined castles and great boulders which inspired him until the day of his death in 1842. Despite his early success—he showed his first drawing at the R.A. when he was only twenty—his patrons, who included the influential Dr. Monro, and the considerable income his art teaching brought in, Varley was continually in difficulties owing to his reckless generosity. But "if it were not for my troubles I should burst with joy," he assured a friend; and the arrival of the tipstaff would be a signal for the engaging fellow to collect his materials in order to knock off a few Welsh landscapes in the debtors' prison. In collecting and annotating about seventy *Twentieth Century Drawings* (PLEIADES BOOKS, 18/-) to represent the achievement of contemporary European draughtsmanship, Mr. GRAHAM REYNOLDS entered a competitive field. Indifferent examples cannot be afforded in such a brief survey, and it must be confessed that such fine things as the John head and Picasso's early "Fillete au chien" only just compensate for the unworthy Bonnards and several other plates which it would be kinder not to specify.

N. A. D. W.

## Llewelyn Powys

Arnold Bennett coined a wonderful phrase for the Powys family, "They are all enthusiastic in pleasure"; and probably this applied most completely to *The Life of Llewelyn Powys* (JOHN LANE, 15/-), whose overwhelming love of beauty was the only religion which seemed to him to be true. "Live every day fully as though it were your last" was his creed. Those who were scandalized by his frank rejection of orthodoxy did not always stay to find out how much he was moved by the idea of Christ as separate from the churches, or by what a stern intellectual integrity he was governed. From his father, the Rector of Montacute, he drew his passion for Dorset and the country; from his mother, descended from Donne and Cowper, his acute poetic feeling. With his five brothers and five sisters, all united by a deep bond which was to last all through their lives, Powys had a happy youth; Mr. MALCOLM ELWIN makes it clear that his adult rebellion against the social system was rooted in himself and not in any twists of childhood. From twenty-five onwards he was dogged by consumption, but in spite of it and of continual poverty and lagging recognition he wrote book after book, expressing his way of life in splendid prose and carving for himself an enduring name. It was a burning, fighting, human progress that ended in a Swiss sanatorium in 1939 at the age of fifty-five; but for all his intransigent polemics he was a much-beloved and friendly spirit. As his biographer, Mr. ELWIN is too reverential, too slow to critical humour and too quick to air his own rather easy contempts, but nevertheless he has painted a powerful portrait of a man well worth remembering.

E. O. D. K.

## "If All the World Were Paper . . ."

A good many novels have been written from time to time about newspapers and magazines and the people who write and edit and own them, and in most cases it is the periodical concerned and not the human element behind it which usurps the central place in the story. Mr. HOWARD SPRING's *Dunkerley's* (COLLINS, 8/6) reverses the process, which is perhaps hardly surprising, since Mr. SPRING's interest is definitely in humanity and not in the sort of abstractions whose veins, if they were opened, would run printer's ink instead of blood. The action takes place in that incredible past when paper shortages were still undreamt of, when popular weeklies written, as was somewhat unkindly said, by the half-educated for the uneducated, were rather commoner than blackberries, and new magazines came bursting from the press at the rate of two or three a month; and the characters are linked together by the common bond of their association in one capacity or another with "Dunkerley's"—the new monthly which is the successor of the earlier "Hard Facts" which brought Sir Daniel Dunkerley his fortune and incidentally provided the title for the first volume of the trilogy of which the present novel forms the second. The main thread of the story is concerned with Alec Dillworth and his sister Elsie, their loves and their successes, and the fate which seems to bind them to the tragic childhood they have tried to escape from; but the minor characters are on the whole fully as convincing as, possibly more so than, the principals. Best of all, perhaps, is the shatteringly truthful portrait of the clerical *pisseur*, the Reverend Theodore Chrystal, engaged by the enterprising proprietor of "Dunkerley's" to "put the Old Story across" for Dunkerley Publications at twenty guineas a thousand words.

C. F. S.



"Would it be possible to arrange that some of the fuel you saved on the lunch be squandered on the coffee?"



*"Won't you EVER grow up, Daddy?"*

### For Any Number of Players

FAMILIES gathered together beneath one roof for the Christmas reunion are always at a loss to know what to do with themselves during the later part of the day. This simple fact is acknowledged by the great newspapers which exert themselves at this season to provide Giant General Knowledge Papers, Bumper Quizzes and other narcotics suited to the restless, questing spirit of the age. Candidates who score seventy per cent. or over can consider themselves better at this type of entertainment than those who score less.

But there are still, hidden away in odd nooks and crannies, little knots

and whorls of humanity not yet convinced that to write down the author of *Peregrine Pickle*, complete the following six quotations (which I omit), and give the name of Sir Isaac Newton's dog, brings into the home quite enough of the traditional warmth and glow of Christmas Day. In their dumb, inarticulate way they feel that a man who wants to score seventy per cent. at anything on such an occasion is a poop, without enough spirit to set light to a plum pudding.

For their benefit I offer the following description of an old-fashioned party-game, which is in danger of dying out. It can be played by any

number of people, grown-ups and children alike.

#### HIPPETY-POPPETY-PUP, MY NUMBER'S UP

Everybody loves Hippety-Poppety-Pup. Three children are sent out of the room and each must think of a number. It is best to keep the numbers quite small at first, and of course each child must think of a different number without letting the other two children know what it is. Small children often find this rather difficult and a good plan, especially when all are new to the game, is for a "grown-up" to go outside with them (a childless aunt will often volunteer) and let each child whisper its chosen number in her ear. In this way she can tell in a moment whether any of the numbers are the same. To make this clearer, suppose Ann chooses "Four," Pamela, who is rather older, "Seven," and little Roger "One." There is no duplication and the game may proceed. But if Ann has chosen "One," too, the grown-up must explain to her that another number would be better, without of course "letting on" that Roger has decided on "One" as well. Don't frighten her. Just ask her quite gently to think of another number, and make sure she understands that nobody is going to be cross with her for thinking of "One" in the first place; it is just that some other number would be nicer. Children will always accept an older person's guidance in matters of this kind, if handled tactfully and firmly. If Ann now chooses "Seven" (Pamela's number, it will be remembered), it will probably be better, especially if Ann is at all a nervous child, not to worry her any further but to go across to Pamela and ask her to change her number instead. Then if Pamela makes "One" (Roger's number) her second choice, it will be Roger's turn to think of another one, and so on. Endless fun can be had in this way before the game has properly started, given patience and goodwill on both sides.

While the children are out of the room, the others have been busy thinking of a number too. Only they must all think of the *same* number. The best way to do this is for some boy or girl in the room to be chosen as "Leader." Then the Leader thinks of a number—"Nine" is a good one—and everybody else agrees to it, unless somebody happens to think of a better.

Now we are ready to begin. The first child is called in, and immediately on entry must say—

*Hippety-Poppety-Pup,  
My number's up!*

The company reply by all chanting together—

*Quiz? Quiz? Quiz?  
Tell us what it is?*

and the child then tells its number. (It is more fun, by the way, if the words "Quiz? Quiz? Quiz?" are accompanied by wagging movements of the forefinger, as though beating time to music.)

It is now the child's turn to guess the "company's" number, and this she does by making a series of guesses. If the first number she guesses is *lower* than the number chosen by the company, everybody jumps up on tiptoe, at the same time gleefully repeating—

*Chip, Chip, CHOP!  
Mine's on TOP!*

but if her guess is *higher*, all must go down on hands and knees mumbling (and do *mumble*)—

*Snip, Snap, Snorum,  
Mine's on the floorum,  
taking care actually to touch the*

carpet with their foreheads on the word "floorum." This part of the game can be relied on to produce much good-humoured banter at the expense of the less agile and more "portly" members of the party!

Of course, when the first child has guessed correctly, the next child is called in and the game begins all over again as before. Endless variations can be introduced as the players become more skilful.

\* \* \* \* \*  
If you don't think much of this game, try writing out the names of the Kings of England beginning at William II (everybody knows William I). Give yourself five marks for every name spelt correctly, and if you score over fifty offer your services to the M.C.C. Or balance a glass of water on your head and see whether you can pick up a piece of useful information off the hearth-rug with your teeth. If the water goes down your neck, you are below average.

H. F. E.

## Public Speaking

I HAVE occupied the position of Sympson's closest friend for rather more than a decade, and the office has been full of hazards and annoyances. Nothing in the past, however, can be compared to my present sufferings since Sympson went into politics. The quiet evenings at home to which I looked forward during my long years abroad, placidly smoking my pipe and listening or not to the harmless prattle of my wife or turning on the wireless and then turning it off again: these joys have vanished.

As soon as I get really comfortable in my chair Sympson drops in.

"I'm speaking to-night," he says, "and I want you to come along. The notices were a bit late going out and there may not be much of a crowd. Your presence may just make the difference between a successful meeting and a flop."

"I can't see that one person will make any difference," I reply weakly.

"If everybody argued that way," says Sympson sternly, "nobody would come."

So I trail along with him to some dim hall, where I take a seat near the back. Sympson marches up boldly to the front, sits down beside the lady chairman, and smiles round on the assembled company in what he imagines to be a vote-catching way. The chairman makes a short and

sensible speech, the treasurer makes an earnest plea for subscriptions, the secretary gives notice of future meetings, and then Sympson stands up and starts talking.

Presumably he enjoys it, but it is no exaggeration to say that he is in a minority. There is a monotonous regularity in his technique. He always begins by saying that as he has really come down to get the views of the meeting, and not to force his own views on the audience, he will be very brief. He then makes what is presumed by the broad-minded to be a joke, but nobody laughs. I always used to laugh myself when I could see from his face that it was meant to be a joke, but my laugh sounded so extremely loud amid the dead silence of the rest of the audience, and evoked so many disapproving glances, that I have abandoned what may be called unilateral risibility.

Then Sympson says: "But the antics of the present Government are no laughing matter. Take coal, for instance . . ." This phase goes on for perhaps forty minutes, and then he says: "But I have spoken longer than I intended, and I will only add in conclusion . . ."

This bit, which is mostly either quotations from Mr. Churchill which he ascribes to Mr. Eden, or quotations from the *Telegraph* which he ascribes

to *The Times*, or original ideas of his own which he ascribes to "large sections of the party," takes twenty minutes, and then he tries another joke. He often tells me that if you get the audience in a good humour to start with, and send them home in a good humour, it does not so much matter what you say in between.

This may or may not be a sound system, but in his case it is spoiled by his absolute inability to put over a joke that will amuse his audience. He has stolen jokes from every daily newspaper in the country without succeeding in persuading the voters to abandon their air of grim and gloomy determination. Last Tuesday he had a mass meeting, and he said to me beforehand that he was going to raise a laugh if he perished in the attempt. He tried three separate jokes at the beginning of his speech, one of which was borrowed from a weekly paper that is rumoured to specialize in that sort of thing, and at the end of his speech he made eight further jokes, two of which were taken from back numbers of the same periodical, but not a single titter could he raise.

Then he stepped forward a few inches to drive home his final point, going beyond the edge of the high platform, and falling into the arms of Mrs. Cantlethorpe, one of our most useful workers, who was sitting in the front row. Immediately the hall resounded with happy laughter, and the agent insists that something similar should be done at each meeting. To repeat this performance at regular intervals for the next few years does not appeal to Sympson, and he hopes that the sitting Member will accept a Colonial Governorship or a seat on the Cheese Board.

The agent says, rather obscurely, that if we have a by-election before Sympson becomes too well known we shall stand a sporting chance.



"I think mine needs a new flint."

## 645 Out

**A**USTRALIA six hundred and forty-five Out," says Slávka, pointing to the headline. "What is 'Out'?"

She pronounces "out" to rhyme with "boot," but doesn't come from Scotland. Slávka is Czech and has learnt enough English to say "Good morning—how are you?" I, on the other hand, have learnt only enough to say "Dobra den—jak se mate?" which is much the same in Czech (or would be if I knew where to put the accents).

That's why the explanations have to be made in French (which we both speak with much hesitation) or German (where the hesitation is even greater).

"What is 'oot'?" repeats Slávka.

"C'est très compliqué," I begin—everything I'm called upon to explain has that characteristic. I take a deep breath and plunge: "Alors . . ."—that always sounds good—"Alors—er—c'est cricket."

"Cricket?" says Slávka.

"Oui. C'est un jeu . . ."—that doesn't sound quite right—" . . . well, it's ein Spiel avec une balle et deux parties—I think it's 'parties'—de onze."

"Ah," says Slávka. "Football."

"Mais non—pas football. Cricket."

"Oh," says Slávka unhelpfully.

I take another deep breath. "Alors, il y a trois—er—stumps . . . ici." I point to my cup of tea.

"Stumps?" says Slávka.

"Oui—pièces de bois—Holzstücke—long comme ça." I demonstrate the length.

Slávka shakes her head wonderingly. Noticing her umbrella, I find a moment's inspiration.

"C'est comme trois ombrelles—er—parapluies—qui se tiennent debout—er—ici," I add, again pointing to my cup of tea.

"Parce qu'il y a beaucoup de pluie en Angleterre, n'est-ce pas?"

That wasn't quite what I'd intended.

"Non, ils—elles sont pas ouvertes. Sie sind geschlossen."

"Ah, oui," says Slávka, again shaking her head in puzzlement.

"Et il y a encore trois stumps ici," I explain, indicating her cup of tea, "et, entre ici et ici, il y a . . ."—I do a quick calculation on the table-cloth—" . . . vingt mètres."

I decide to avoid mention of bails, creases and similar snags.

"Et il y a un homme ici qui—er—bowls—er—jette la balle . . ." (I hope the M.C.C. will forgive me for "jette," but what else could I say?)

"Il jette ce football . . . ?"

"Non, non, pas un football. C'est petite—comme ça," I explain, demonstrating with the sugar-bowl.

I hurry on: "Et il y a un homme ici qui frappe la balle avec son cricket-bat. Un cricket-bat, c'est une pièce de bois . . ."

"Oui, oui," says Slávka, "comme une parapluie."

Beads of sweat form on my forehead. I can't think of anything in the world that looks like a cricket-bat—apart from another cricket-bat. Weakly, I nod. "Quelque chose comme ça."

"Je comprends," smiles Slávka.

"Alors, l'homme jette la balle et . . . tries—versucht—tente à frapper les trois stumps avec la balle mais l'autre homme tente les protéger avec son cricket-bat. Comprenez?"

"Non," says Slávka.

Women never could understand a simple game like cricket.

There is a pause and I hope she is forgetting the whole beastly business.

"Australia six hundred forty-five out," she repeats.

"Oui, ça veut dire que toute

Australia est—er—hors de combat pour six hundred and forty-five runs—er—pointes."

"Toute Australia?" she says, eyes widening.

Quick, quick, what's the French for test match?

"Match de test," I explain.

That doesn't help.

"Alors," I continue, despairingly trying to explain the British way of life. "Quand il n'y a pas de guerre en Angleterre, nous avons chaque année une grande bataille avec Australia pour voir qui peut jouer au cricket le meilleur. Et celui qui gagne emporte les—er—Ashes. Les Cendres. Die Asche."

"Vraiment?" marvels Slávka.

I nod complacently. "C'est une coutume britannique."

"Et on se bat avec—er—" it's Slávka's turn for the French to break down; she tries German: "Man kämpft mit Brandbomben?"

What is the woman talking about—"One fights with incendiary bombs?"

I begin to wilt under the strain. Somehow, striving to collect my wits, I have the idea that Slávka's impression of cricket is of a game played with two cups of tea, seven umbrellas and a sugar-bowl, enlivened with an annual civil war with Australia that goes on till both sides are hors de combat.

But, seriously, how else can I explain "Australia Out"—or, rather, "Oot"?

Sooner or later Mr. Molotov is going to see that headline, and he's sure to raise the matter before the Security Council.

And I'm just gloating, waiting to see what kind of a job Mr. Bevin will make of it when he has to explain.

Meanwhile Slávka has been studying the headlines of the Second Test. . . .

Here ends Mr. Punch's Two

Hundred and Eleventh Volume



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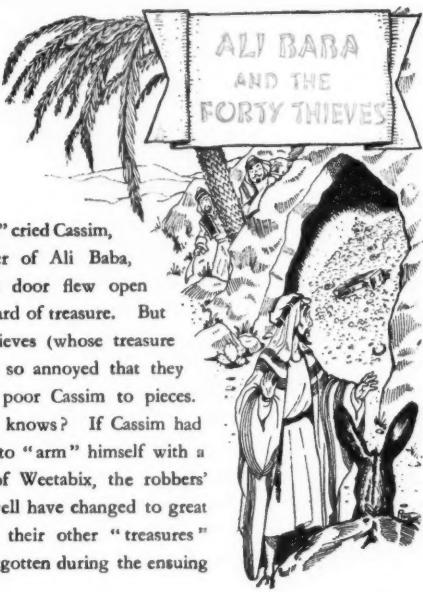
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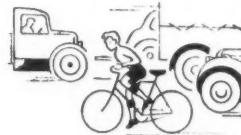
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